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Notes on church of
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Notes on
The Church of St. Michaels, Musbury,
The Drakes of Ashe and their Monument.



MUSBURY CHURCH.



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Notes on
The Church of St. Michaels, Musbury;
the
Drakes of Ashe and their Monument.

THE name Musbury is from the Saxon "Maes-Barrow" or the Big Hill (Membury or Mem-Barrow, a neighbouring village with hill of lower elevation, means Little Hill). Maidenhayne, a hamlet in the parish, means the enclosure under the Big Hill. The hill is now called Musbury Castle and is crowned with earthworks, erected in almost pre-historic days.

The first Rector of whom there is any known record is Roger de Hamtone, instituted June 27th, 1204. (The list of Rectors in the porch does not include the above, which was found after the list was compiled), and this proves that there was an earlier church than the present one, which dates from the early 15th century; but no trace of the former building remains.

The present church consists of Nave with N. and S. Aisles, Chancel and West Tower. The S. Aisle is continued Eastward beyond the line of the Rood Screen (now demolished) forming a side chapel. There is no trace in any part of the building of any construction earlier than 1400. The Tower is of the low broad type, of which Seaton is another example. Its date might be about 1430. The West window is a later insertion, its three-centred arch and debased tracery clearly marking a subsequent period. A peculiarity exists in the West Doorway. The door is recessed so deeply in the massive West Wall, which is 3 feet 8 inches thick, as to form a Porch. This doorway has evidently been altered and is not in its original form. Traces of a larger arched doorway may be seen above the present one. In most churches, the West door of the Tower is near the outer surface of the wall, the wall being recessed *inside*, with a segmental arch under the West window, which allows the door to open inwards. It may be that this porch-like arrangement at

Musbury is due to the elevated and exposed position of the Church. The smallness of the belfry windows, which is unusual for this date, may be accounted for in the same way.

The Chancel and the E. and W. windows of the South Aisle are of modern construction. In 1865 the Chancel was rebuilt and lengthened 8 feet, bringing it to its original length previous to 1798. The South Aisle was re-roofed in 1867, and the Drake Chapel re-roofed in 1869. In 1875, when the Church was restored by Pearson Hayward of Exeter, the North Aisle was entirely re-built; and the North Arcade, the date of which seems to be about 1400, was re-constructed, owing to its being out of the perpendicular, and some of the stone-work being much decayed. A similar style of of capital and moulding may be seen in Uplyme Church, in fact, almost identical. The old stone-work has evidently been re-dressed. The doorway of the South Porch might be of the same date as the North Arcade, but its height, in proportion to its width, and the absence of deep bonding in the jambs, may mean that it was tampered with when the porch was re-built; or it may be that it is a modern imitation. The sun-dial base and ball on the gable of the Porch, and the South windows, are of the 17th century. The small square window (now blocked) high up behind the Drake Monument, is also of the 17th century. The outline of a larger pointed window may be traced on the outside of this wall. This was probably filled in when the monument was moved from the centre of the Chapel, and placed against the wall. The South Arcade is characteristic of the Perpendicular period. It may have been constructed about 1480 or 1490. The Easternmost arch and pillar were built in 1875, as well as half the next arch, a massive pier, containing a stairway to the Rood-loft, having been then demolished. The roofs are all entirely modern. The floor of the church is said to have been lowered about 18 inches.

There is a remarkable absence of carved stone-work, the gargoyles of the Tower being the only examples.

The Font is modern.

The shallow moulding of the Tower arch, which runs continuously from base to base, without impost, is characteristic of the 15th century. The masonry of the older walls is very rough rubble-work.

The Tower contains a peal of six bells. Formerly there were three only, but in the year 1785 these were re-cast and made into five bells, to which a sixth was added recently to complete the peal.

11



ASHE HOUSE (SOUTH).

THE DRAKES OF ASHE.

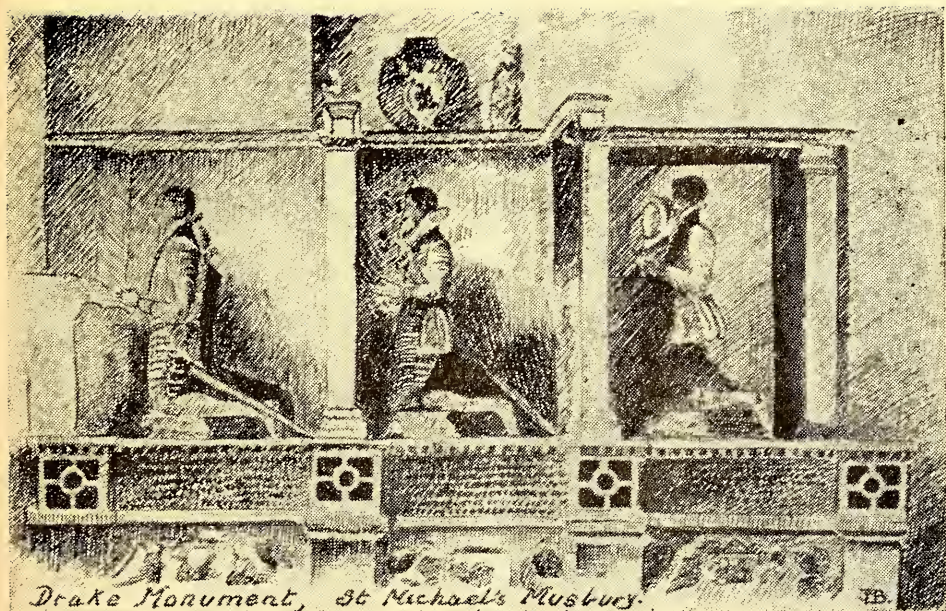
The first family of whom we can find trace in any record as living at Ashe House is that of De Ashe, from whom it was handed down on the distaff side (by female descent) to Christiana daughter of John Billet, and by her marriage during the reign of Henry the Fifth, about A D. 1415, to John Drake of Exmouth, came into possession of the Drake family, with whom it remained till 1793. In 1787 it was let for three years to Sir John Pole, Bart., who resided there while Shute House was being built. In 1793 it was bought by Mr. George Tucker, Solicitor, of Axminster, and sold at his death in 1799 to Captain Wm. Payne, of the 53rd Regiment, who was badly wounded at Waterloo. There is a field called Mount Drake on the Western slopes of Musbury Castle, in which may still be seen traces of a mansion known as Mount Drake, being the property of the same family of Drake from before the time of William the Conqueror. There still exist various branches of this ancient family both in England and the United States. These latter trace their descent through Thomas Drake, grandson of John Drake of Ashe, who emigrated from his home at Colyton, Devon, to Weymouth, Mass., U.S.A., in about the year 1653. Some of these have recently visited Musbury in order to see the home of their ancestors at Ashe, and the Drake Monument in Musbury Church. The famous navigator and sea captain, Sir Francis Drake, belonged probably to a collateral branch of the above family but there is no evidence to show that he was nearly related to them.

An ancient record states that on April 21st, 1387, permission was granted to the owners of Ashe House by Brantyngham, Bishop of Exeter, to erect a chapel at Ashe, which still exists, but is no longer used as such. The farmhouse of Great Trill, situated on the northern outskirts of the parish of Musbury, also belonged to the Drakes of Ashe, and for a time was occupied by members of the family.

The first Duke of Marlborough was born at Ashe House in 1650. He, together with his sister Arabella and other members of the family, were baptized in the private chapel. Their father was Winston Churchill who married Elizabeth daughter of John Drake and his wife Eleanor daughter of Lord Boteler, of Bramfield, Herts.

THE DRAKE MONUMENT.

The Drake Monument, which attracts many visitors during the summer months from America as well as from all parts of England,



Drake Monument, St Michael's Mustbury.

F.B.

was erected in 1611, another Bay being added about 35 years later.

The figures represent :—

- (1.) John Drake and his wife Amy, daughter of Roger Grenville of Stow. This John Drake was High Sheriff of Devon, and appointed Steward of the Monastery of Newenham, between Musbury and Axminster, by its last Abbot.
- (2.) Sir Barnard Drake, Kt., and his wife Gertrude, daughter of Bartholemew Fortescue of Filleigh. This Sir Barnard Drake, a Justice of the Peace, was knighted by Queen Elizabeth for his gallant services as a sea captain, fighting the Spaniards off Newfoundland. His last exploit was to capture a Portugal ship which was privateering in the English Channel. The seamen on board were assigned at the Exeter Assizes. While awaiting trial these unfortunate men contracted gaol fever, a virulent form of typhus which proved fatal to eleven of the Jury and three of the Justices, including Sir Barnard Drake, who was taken to Crediton where he died and was buried in April, 1587.
- (3.) John Drake and his wife Dorothy, daughter of William Bitten.

The Drake Monument was skilfully restored by Mr. Herbert Read, Sculptor, of Exeter, in 1926. Mr. Louis Stoughton Drake, of Boston, Mass., U.S.A., a direct descendant of the Drakes of Ashe, undertook to bear the necessary expense when he came to Musbury in the previous year and found the tomb in urgent need of repair. During the restoration of the Monument a flat stone was noticed lying on it, with five crosses one at either corner and in centre, measuring twelve by six inches. It is evidently a Mensa, probably of the 15th century; this may have been the centre of an original stone altar in this church, or a more likely theory is that it was the altar top of the Chapel attached to Ashe House.

THE ALTAR PLATE.

The Altar Plate, consisting of a handsome silver Flagon, Chalice and two Patens, was the gift of Sir William Drake, Bart., of Ashe, in 1730.

THE STAINED GLASS WINDOWS.

The East window, which is not a good specimen of its kind, is dedicated to the memory of William Farley Lethbridge, and

Susannah his wife. He was Nelson's Flag-Lieutenant on H.M.S. Fondroyent, and later lost a leg during an action while serving on H.M.S. Temeraire. Retiring, he bought and re-built Mountfield House. Later he voyaged to India under the old East India Company, and dying on the way home, was buried at sea. Susannah, his third wife, lived in Musbury until her death, being remembered for her goodness and charity. The window depicting the Good Samaritan was erected at her death by her sons.

The window at the end of the South Aisle is to the memory of Thomas Charles Lethbridge, son of the above.

The Reredos, a handsome specimen of Italian mosaic work, was given by Sir William Drake, of Oatlands, Surrey, in 1874.

A considerable sum of money was raised by the Rev. Horace W. Thrupp whilst Rector of this parish for the restoration of the Church in 1874-5.

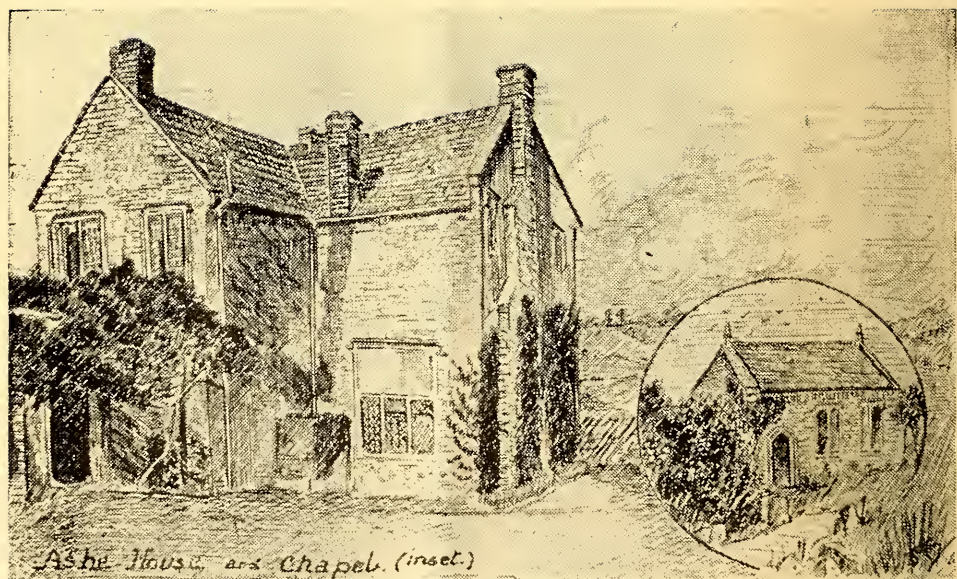
There is an entry in an old Churchwarden's Book relating to the Churchyard stating that a yew tree was planted in 1828 to the north of the Church.

A Village Hall has recently been erected at a cost of about £650, including furnishing and other expenses, and at a meeting of the subscribers a resolution was passed expressing their wish that the Hall be called "Drake's Hall" in acknowledgment of the financial help given by members of that family, amounting to nearly £100, and that it may long serve as a symbol of the bond that links Musbury with the Drakes of Ashe who lived in Musbury from very early times till the end of the 18th century.

(Signed) HENRY G. COCKERTON,

Rector.

September, 1929.



ASHE HOUSE (NORTH).

List of Rectors of Musbury.

<i>Rector.</i>	<i>Date of Institution.</i>	<i>Patron.</i>
Roger de Hamtone	... 27 June, 1204	Matilda de Curteney
John Pinelle	... 20 Dec., 1260	Sir John de Curtney
Henry de Esse	... 10 June, 1266	" "
Sir Hugh	... 3 Nov., 1314	" "
Sir Robert de Brandone	4 March, 1316	" "
Sir John de Southdone	... 19 Sept., 1347	Sir Hugh de Courtney, Earl of Devon
Sir Roger de Radway	... 15 July, 1349	" "
William Michel	... 15 Nov., 1363	" "
Robert Mareschall	about 28 June, 1397	" "
John Hylle	... 15 May, 1403	Edward Courtney
Sir John Mathu	... 23 Dec., 1420	" "
Sir John Hille	... 6 Aug., 1427	Henry VI, King of England and France
Master John Waldene	... 16 June, 1430	" "
Sir William Beare	about 28 Oct., 1434	Thos. Courteney, Earl of Devon
Sir Richard Wysce	... 18 Oct., 1454	" "
John Strete	... 7 Dec., 1458	" "
Thomas Gossipp	... 23 Jan., 1475/6	Prince George, Duke of Clarence
Richard Watson	... 6 Nov., 1479	King Edward
Richard Natrys	27 May, 1497	Edward, Earl of Devon
Robert Saunders	... No date	" " "
Thomas Balle	... 2 Mar., 1504	" " "
William Balham	... 2 May, 1527	Catherine Courtenay, Countess of Devon

<i>Rector.</i>	<i>Date of Institution.</i>	<i>Patron.</i>
William Parson	... 22 Jan., 1547	John Drake of Exmouth
Thomas Raddon	... 16 April, 1564	Bernard Drake
John Jordan	about May, 1598	„ „
Matthew Drake	... 7 May, 1630	John Drake
Richard Fairand	... No date	
(Puritan Minister elected 1662)		
Richard Cresson	... 22 Nov., 1662	John Drake of Trill
Nathaniel Pearse	... 25 April, 1672	Sir John Drake of Trill
John Ayshford	... 19 Dec., 1687	The Bishop
Philip Westcott	... 2 Sept., 1710	Sir Wm. Drake of Ashe
Philip Prince	... 11 Oct., 1711	„ „ „
Charles Hopping	... 12 Mar., 1713/4	„ „ „
William Salter, M.A.	... 24 Dec., 1726	„ „ „
Benjamin Symes, M.A.	... 18 May, 1770	„ „ „
George Tucker, L.L.B.	... 28 Sept., 1798	George Tucker
Richard Lewis, M.A.	... 21 Nov., 1816	Richard Levis and William Peterson
George Tucker, S.C.L.	... 22 July, 1822	George Tucker
Horace William Thrupp, M.A.	5 Aug., 1863	Rev. John Vaughan Payne
Thomas Edwards, B.A.	... 5 Dec., 1906	Col. Vaughan Payne
Henry George Cockerton, M.A.	Nov., 1920	„ „ „

Proceeds from the sale of this leaflet are devoted by the Rector
to Parish purposes.

The Ashes

Burke (?) in his Conversations - (Member of Parliament) says of John Ash, member for Wilshire in the Long Parliament - that the Ash family was a family of respectability in the bosom of the Exc. Reas., (Deen) so far back - that he never lost its name from that family -

I think that is an error - The name of the family seems to have been Ash very early - but it was written Esse:- the 'E' having the sound of A when spoken - (as in France today (é - a) - as in English may) Anglo-Naxon) now in 1266 - Henry de Esse - was the Pastor of the church at Musbury Devonshire -

In the last edition of the Encycl. Britanica -



under the heading of "Esse" - you will
find that, 5 miles from Plymouth in
1277 was the town of "Esse" - which
in 1302 - became written "Ash" - and
in 1397 became Assheborough - and
in 1584 became Salt-ash - what is it now
Salt-ash - was ⁱⁿ 1302 - "Essh" - reading "Esse" -
so written - but doubtless - pronounced "Ash" -
the "E" having the sound of "A" -

It is merely a matter of spelling.

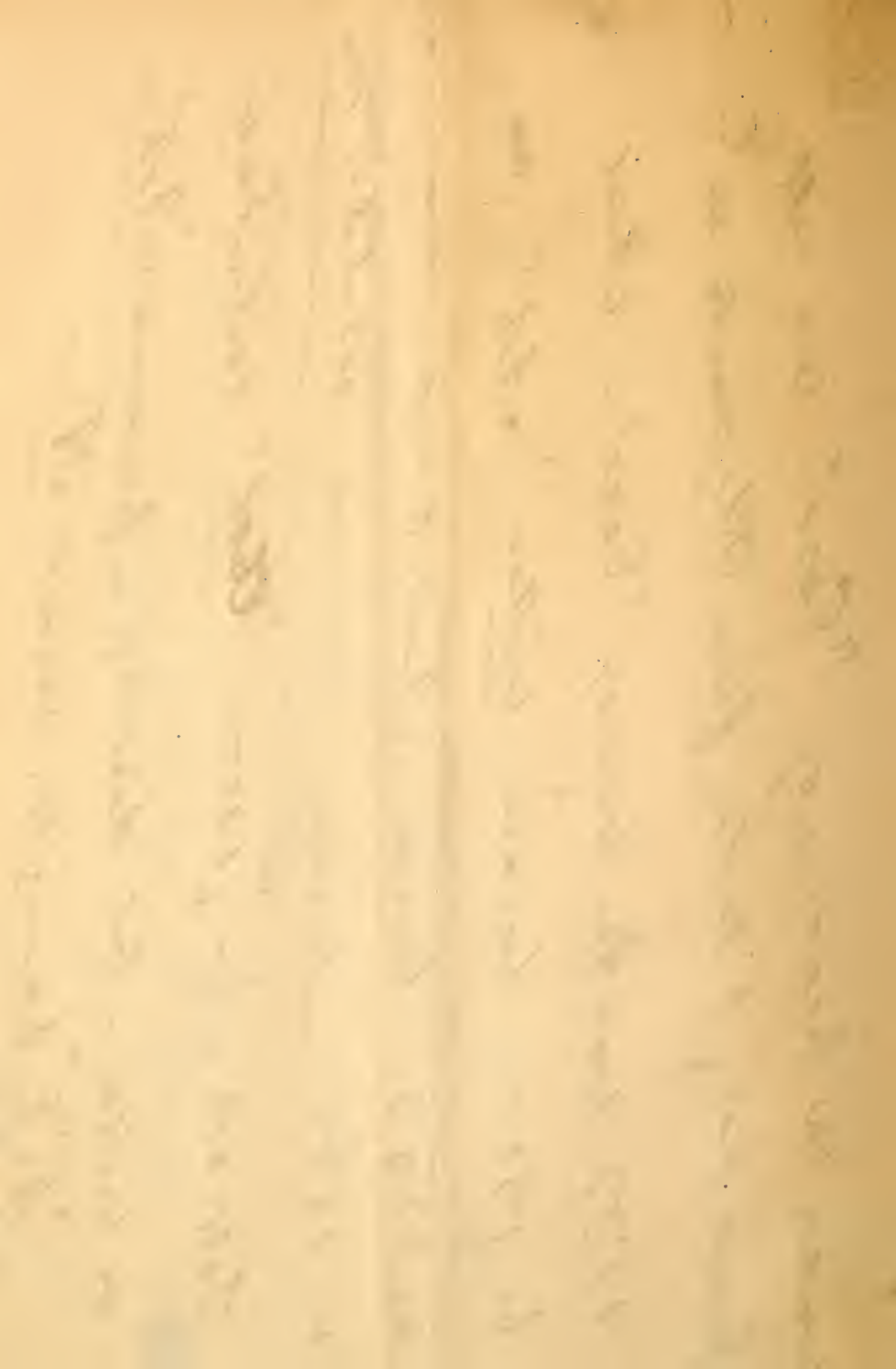
In the History of Wiltshire England - is
"The Families of Esse - Ashe - or D'Essence in
Wiltshire and Yorkshire -

1 See Oliver T
Co, 1326

11 - Henry 2^d son T D & H - of Richard Forrizen -
and acquired manors of
Clyst and Forrizen in Devon -

and so on: showing that the Wiltshire Ashe family
came from Devon.

This is the origin of the name Ashe as Mr M. Cadwin



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